Impact of full convertibility of rupee

1655. SHRI PAMPON THA. KIRUTTINAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state

(a) whether Government have assessed the effect of the full convertibility of the rupee on country's indebtedness and the payment of interest on the foreign debts during the next three years; and

(b) what steps Government propose to take to reduce country's burden in the repayment of foreign debt?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (DR. ABRAR AHMED): (a) and (b) The unification of exchange rate has no direct impact on country's indebtedness and on payment of interest in terms of foreign currency liabilities. In rupee terms the debt servicing would depend on the prevailing market rate.

High powered committee report on departmental accounting organisations

1656. SHRI PASUMPON THA. KIRUTTINAN: Will the Mnister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a High Powered Committee headed by Shri S. B. Lal was set up to look into the working and structure of the departmental accounting organisations;

(b) if so, wheher the Committee recommended integration of the Finance and Accounts wings in the Ministries/Departments;

(c) whether such integration would lead to substantial savings in Government expenditure; and

(d) if so, what action Government propose to take on the recommendation of the Committee?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M. V. CHANDRASHEKHAR MURTHY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) The recommendation of the Committee are under examination.

Russian Government's request for Technical Credit

1657. SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Russian Government has urged India not to scale down the committed technical credit of 285 million dollars (Rupees Eight Hundred Fifty Crores) agreed during early last year; and

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction in respect thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (DR. ABRAR AHMED): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Bidding for deep-sea fishing vessels

1658. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received specific representations from various constituents of the deep-sea fishing industry in Andhra Pradesh that the cartel of businessmen had by bid seized deep-sea fishing vessels for use as steel scrap;

(b) if so, what are the details of this representation; and

(c) what action Government have taken to retrieve such vessels before they are broken up for scrap?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (DR. ABRAR AHMED): (a) No; Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The auctions of deep sea fishing vessels are conducted by Receivers appointed by the Central Government under the provisions of the Shipping Development Fund Committee (SDFC) (Abolition) Act, 1986, and the Receiver is deemed to be the agent of the shipowner. Government has no jurisdiction over the vessels after their auction.

Stopping seizure and deep-sea fishing vessels by SCICI

1659. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to direct the SCICI seizing deep-sea fishing vessels;

(b) if not, what are the reasons therefor; and

(c) the names of companies where vessels are about to be seized?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (DR. ABRAR AHMED): (a) to (c) Government's jurisdiction in matters pertaining to SCICI arises only in respect of SCICIs role as an agent of Government under the Shipping Development Fund Committee (SDFC) (Abolition) Act. Under this Act, SCICI acts as a "designated person" (viz. an agent) of Government. SCICI's funcitons in respect of the coercive recovery of loans disbursed by the erstwhile SDFC extends to the appointment of Receivers, who, in turn; have powers to independently decide whether and when to seize specific fishing vessels. The question of SCICI seizing such vessels; therefore; does not arise.

Illicit drug Trade money deposited in Banks

1660. SHRI S. MADHAVAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a report by the US State Department pointed out that the money generated in illicit drug trade is being deposited in an account in Punjab state; and

(b) if so, what steps are being taken to freeze such bank accounts?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M. V. CHANDRASHEKHAR MURTHY): (a) The Drug Enforcement Administration of U.S.A. sent information that some drug money has been deposited in an account in Punjab.

(b) The account has since been traced and immobilised. DEA has been asked to furnish more details which are awaited. If any more transactions comes to adverse notice action to trace and immobilise the accounts will be taken in accordance with the law.

Reguations to check smuggling

1661. SHRI JAGIR SINGH DARD: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state

(a) whether it is a fact that there is no need of showing custom duty paid receipts now;